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ABSTRACT

The address of the Assistant Secretary for Vocational and Adult Education before the 1983 Rural Education Association Conference reviews recent Department of Education activities in support of rural education and details the Department's rural education policy for the 80's. Characteristics of rural America and rural education are briefly discussed. The Department's 1982-83 rural education activities are summarized. Five major objectives of the Department's Rural Education Committee 1984 management plan are listed. Six rural education goals of the Office of Vocational and Adult education are given: support/implement the Department's rural education policy; identify an appropriate research and demonstration agenda for rural vocational and adult education; upgrade the quality and quantity of information generated on issues in rural vocational and adult education; foster a unified Department approach on issues relating to rural vocational and adult education; create an effective voice for rural education in policy development and other deliberations; improve interagency communication/coordination in operation of adult, vocational, and other employment training programs in rural communities with efforts to promote the economic well-being of these communities. Five activities to achieve these goals are summarized. The full text of the Department's 10-point policy statement on rural education and rural family education is included. (MH)

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# A RURAL EDUCATION POLICY FOR THE 80's

BY

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ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR
VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION

BEFORE THE
SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
RURAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

MANHATTAN, KANSAS
OCTOBER 17, 1983

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## A Rural Education Policy for the 80's

It is a personal pleasure, and professional privilege, to again address the Annual Conference of the Rural Education Association - the 75th Annual Conference of one of the oldest and most effective rural education advocacy organizations in existence. In speaking at your conference last year in Rock port, Maine, I stated my conviction that your organization, and its members, are <u>important</u> to the future of this country and represent much of what is <u>good</u>, <u>strong</u>, <u>enduring</u> and <u>promising</u>, both in our society and in our educational system. My continued association with your organization's leaders during the past year, and my frequent review of your objectives and activities through the REA Newsletter and other communications have only served to strengthen that conviction. We sincerely appreciate your effectiveness in providing leadership to and in representing rural education, its schools, its teachers, its administrators, and its state and regional agencies. I am also more aware of the complexity of your task. As Mary B. Livingston, Instructional Specialist with the Utah State Department of Education, told us at the AASA Annual Legislative Conference in Washington last month, "Being a small school administrator is like trying to put sox on an octopus."

I bring you the warm greetings and best wishes of Secretary Bell. I join him in congratulating you on the excellent work that your organization is doing in rural America. You have proven to be an enduring voice for rural education in the continuing national debate on the education policies that this country should adopt in the pursuit of excellence in education. We are pleased with the cooperative working relationship that has developed between the REA and the Department of Education.

WE PLAN TO ANNOUNCE TODAY, ON BEHALF OF SECRETARY BELL, THE ISSUANCE OF A DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RURAL EDUCATION POLICY STATEMENT. ALTHOUGH THAT ANNOUNCEMENT, AND THE CONTENT OF THE POLICY STATEMENT, WILL BE THE MAJOR FOCUS OF MY REMARKS TODAY, I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO COVER TWO OTHER TOPICS. FIRST, I WILL BRIEFLY DISCUSS SOME OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF RURAL AMERICA AND RURAL EDUCATION WHICH CONFRONT US IN THE 80'S AND, SECOND, REVIEW WITH YOU A FEW OF THE WAYS WE ARE ADDRESSING THOSE ISSUES AND NEEDS.

THE 1980 CENSUS REVEALED THAT THE RURAL POPULATION OF THIS COUNTRY IS A SIZABLE ONE: 59.5 MILLION AMERICANS. AS DEFINED IN THE 1980 CENSUS, THE RURAL POPULATION COMPRISES ALL PERSONS LIVING OUTSIDE URBANIZED AREAS IN THE OPEN COUNTRY OR IN COMMUNITIES WITH LESS THAT 2500 INHABITANTS. IT ALSO INCLUDES THOSE LIVING IN AREAS OF EXTENDED CITIES WITH A POPULATION DENSITY OF LESS THAN 1000 INHABITANTS PER SQUARE MILE. THIS, INCIDENTALLY, IS THE DEFINITION OF THE RURAL POPULATION THAT IS USED IN THE DEPARTMENT'S RURAL EDUCATION POLICY STATEMENT. WE HAVE EXPERIENCED DURING THE LAST DECADE THE LARGEST GROWTH IN OUR RURAL POPULATION IN ANY DECADE IN ONE HUNDRED YEARS. THE RURAL POPULATION INCREASED FROM 53.6 MILLION MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN IN 1970 TO 59.5 MILLION IN 1980 - A GROWTH RATE OF 11.1%.

STRANGE AS IT MAY SEEM, A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF THE GROWTH IN URBAN AREAS IS ACCOUNTED FOR BY THE GROWTH IN RURAL AREAS. DUE TO THE PHENOMENAL GROWTH IN OUR RURAL POPULATION, MANY RURAL COMMUNITIES EXPERIENCED A POPULATION GROWTH THAT PUSHED THEM OVER THE MAGIC 2500 MARK, AND THEY WERE NO LONGER "RURAL"

AS DEFINED IN THE 1980 CENSUS. MOREOVER, REAL GROWTH, THAT IS, GROWTH IN THE TOTAL AREA OF LAND CONSIDERED URBAN AND THE ACCOMPANYING GROWTH IN POPULATION, WAS OFTEN DUE TO THE ANNEXATION OF RURAL AREAS BY INCORPORATED PLACES OF 2500 OR MORE POPULATION. ALL OF THE GROWTH IN OUR RURAL POPULATION WAS DUE TO GROWTH IN THE NONFARM POPULATION. THE FARM POPULATION ACTUALLY DECLINED IN THE 1970's. THIS HAS MAJOR IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EDUCATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES THAT WE SHOULD EMPLOY FOR THE 1980's.

IN SPITE OF THIS TREMENDOUS GROWTH IN OUR RURAL POPULATION, RURAL AMERICA CONTINUES TO EXPERIENCE A DISPROPORTIONATE SHARE OF THE EDUCATIONAL AND ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION THAT EXISTS IN THIS COUNTRY. THOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN GAINS MADE IN THESE AREAS OVER THE LAST DECADE, RURAL COMMUNITIES CONTINUE TO LAG BEHIND THE REST OF AMERICA IN EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AND ECONOMIC WELL-BEING. WHILE THE POVERTY RATE ROSE FROM 10.7 TO 11.9 IN METRO AREAS, IT ROSE FROM 13.4 TO 15.4 IN RURAL AREAS. THESE CHARACTERISTICS OFTEN CONTRIBUTE TO OUR RURAL "IMAGE PROBLEM." IN MANY PEOPLE'S MINDS, "RURAL" TOO OFTEN CONNOTES A LACK OF ABILITY, A LACK OF CULTURE, OR A LACK OF OTHER QUALITIES RATHER THAN A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO AN URBAN SETTING. THAT CONNOTATION IS UNFORTUNATE, IS UNTRUE, AND IT MUST BE COUNTERED WITH FACT. RURAL AMERICA IS VERY HETEROGENEOUS.

THE TERM RURAL ALSO IMPLIES SMALL COMMUNITIES AND LOW POPULATION DENSITIES. THIS MEANS GREATER ISOLATION AND GREATER DIFFICULTY IN DELIVERING SERVICES, WHETHER THEY ARE HEALTH SERVICES, EDUCATIONAL SERVICES OR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

RURAL SCHOOLS (67% OF ALL SCHOOLS) AND RURAL STUDENTS (33% OF ALL STUDENTS) EXPERIENCE DISTINCT EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS AND EXIST IN UNIQUE SUBCULTURES. RURAL SCHOOLS CHARACTERISTICALLY HAVE HIGHER ATTRITION RATES AND LOWER ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS THAN THEIR URBAN COUNTERPARTS. ALTHOUGH RURAL AREAS ARE RAPIDLY GROWING IN POPULATION THEIR TAX BASES ARE NOT. EVEN THOUGH RURAL SCHOOLS COMMIT GREATER PERCENTAGES OF THEIR LOCAL RESOURCES TO EDUCATION, RURAL SERVICES COST MORE THAN COMPARABLE SERVICES IN URBAN AREAS BECAUSE OF EXPENSIVE TRANSPORTATION REQUIREMENTS IN REMOTE, SPARSELY POPULATED AREAS, SCARCITY OF PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES, AND A WHOLE HOST OF OTHER FACTORS. THESE ARE FACTS OF RURAL LIFE. RURAL DEVELOPMENT IS INHIBITED BY LIMITED SUPPORT SERVICES, LIMITED LEVELS OF AVAILABLE PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE AND LIMITED ROLE MODELS AND EXPOSURES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

HOWEVER, ON THE PLUS SIDE, RURAL AMERICA ENJOYS A RICHER AND MORE DEEPLY ROOTED CULTURAL HERITAGE AND STABILITY THAN TRANSIENT URBAN CENTERS. RURAL AMERICANS ARE CHARACTERISTICALLY SENSITIVE, RESPONSIBLE AND CARING, AND AMONG THE FINEST PEOPLE ANYWHERE. RURAL AMERICA HAS A TREMENDOUS NUMBER OF POSITIVE QUALITIES AND MAY, IN FACT, BE THE BEST PLACE TO LIVE AND TO RAISE A FAMILY.

I COULD, AND PERHAPS SHOULD, SAY MUCH MORE ABOUT THE UNIQUENESS OF RURAL AMERICA AND THE IMPORTANCE OF RURAL EDUCATION BUT I WILL MOVE ON TO A BRIEF REVIEW AND UPDATE ON OUR DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF RURAL EDUCATION. IN EARLY FISCAL YEAR 1982, WE CREATED THE DEPARTMENT'S INTRA-AGENCY COMMITTEE ON RURAL EDUCATION AS OUR RESPONSE TO SECTION 206 OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ORGANIZATION ACT (P.L. 96-88). SECTION 206 DIRECTED THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION TO "PROVIDE A UNIFIED APPROACH TO RURAL EDUCATION AND RURAL FAMILY EDUCATION THROUGH THE COORDINATION OF PROGRAMS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT AND TO WORK WITH THE FEDERAL INTERAGENCY.

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION (FICE) TO COORDINATE RELATED ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS OF OTHER FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES." THE COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE 14 PRINCIPAL OFFICES OF THE DEPARTMENT. I CHAIR THE COMMITTEE WITH DR. DUANE M. NIELSEN SERVING AS VICE-CHAIR. WE ESTABLISHED A BI-MONTHLY SCHEDULE OF REGULAR MEETINGS, WITH DETAILED TIMELINES AND A MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR OUR ACTIVITIES. A REGULAR FEATURE OF EACH MEETING HAS BEEN AN IN-DEPTH, DETAILED PRESENTATION BY ONE OF THE 14 PRINCIPAL OFFICES ON ITS RURAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES. THESE REPORTS ARE DISCUSSED AND ANALYZED FOR POTENTIAL COORDINATION AND FOR OVERLAP OR REDUNDANCY IN RURAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES.

A SYSTEM OF SUBCOMMITTEES WAS DEVELOPED TO PERFORM SPECIFIC TASKS AND TO HELP COORDINATE RURAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES. THESE INCLUDED DEVELOPING A RESOURCE DIRECTORY OF RURAL EDUCATION CONTACTS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT, COMPILING INFORMATION ON RURAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES, AND REVIEWING LEGISLATION, REGULATIONS AND PROCUREMENT ACTIVITIES FOR THEIR EMPHASIS ON RURAL EDUCATION. LINKAGES AND CONTINUING COMMUNICATIONS WERE ESTABLISHED WITH MAJOR ORGANIZATIONS IN RURAL EDUCATION, SUCH AS, THE RURAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION. I HAVE THOROUGHLY ENJOYED MY CONTACTS WITH ROY BRUBACHER, JIM JESS, JOE NEWLIN, AND OTHERS OF YOU WHO ARE IN THE AUDIENCE HERE TODAY. OF COURSE A MAJOR COMMITTEE ACTIVITY WAS THE INITIATION OF WORK ON THE DEPARTMENT'S RURAL EDUCATION POLICY STATEMENT. A SPECIAL SUBCOMMITTEE WAS CREATED TO ASSIST WITH THAT TASK.

WE HAVE CONTINUED THESE INITIATIVES THROUGHOUT FISCAL YEAR 1983. SOME OF YOU HAVE ATTENDED OUR REGULAR BI-MONTHLY MEETINGS AND WE HOPE YOU WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO. MINUTES OF EACH MEETING ARE ROUTINELY SENT TO DR. NEWLIN AND HE, IN TURN, SHARES THEM WITH THE REA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. THE WORK OF THE SUB-

COMMITTEES CONTINUES AND WE HAVE COMPLETED THE FIRST SERIES OF IN-DEPTH, DETAILED REPORTS BY EACH OF THE 14 PRINCIPAL OFFICES ON THEIR RURAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES. THE REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION WAS SUMMARIZED IN THE LATEST ISSUE OF REA NEWS. DR. NIELSEN ADDRESSED THE FEBRUARY CONFERENCE OF PEOPLE UNITED FOR RURAL EDUCATION AND CONTINUES TO WORK CLOSELY WITH NUMEROUS ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN RURAL EDUCATION.

WE HAVE DEVELOPED THE DEPARTMENT'S "RURAL EDUCATION AND RURAL FAMILY EDUCATION POLICY FOR THE 80'S" WHICH WAS RECENTLY APPROVED AND SIGNED BY SECRETARY BELL. I HAVE APPOINTED A PLANNING COMMITTEE FOR A NATIONAL RURAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE WHICH, I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE, WILL BE SPONSORED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND HELD IN WASHINGTON, D.C., IN THE SPRING OF 1984. SEVERAL OF YOU HAVE BEEN INVITED TO SERVE ON THAT COMMITTEE, INCLUDING YOUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JOE NEWLIN AND YOUR 1983-84 PRESIDENT JIM JESS. THIS 27 MEMBER PLANNING COMMITTEE WILL BE CHAIRED BY DR. NIELSEN AND WILL HOLD ITS FIRST MEETING IN WASHINGTON ON OCTOBER 27 AND 28. THE FUNDING FOR PLANNING AND CONDUCTING THE CONFERENCE WILL BE PROVIDED THROUGH MY OFFICE.

WE CONTINUE TO WORK WITH THE FEDERAL INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION (FICE) THROUGH THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON RURAL EDUCATION WHICH I CHAIR. OUR STAFF HAS COMPLETED A STUDY DESIGN AND INSTRUMENTS FOR FIELD TESTING. DATA WILL BE COLLECTED FROM ALL FEDERAL AGENCIES ON ALL FEDERALLY FUNDED RURAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES. THE DATA WILL BE COMPILED INTO AN INVENTORY OF SUCH PROGRAMS. AND AN ANALYSIS AND REPORT WILL BE AVAILABLE IN LATE 1984.

THE SUMMARY OF THE DEPARTMENT'S 1983 RURAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES IS NEARING COMPLETION AND I WILL PRESENT IT TO SECRETARY BELL WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

THIS COMPILATION OF FY 1983 INITIATIVES INCLUDES HUNDREDS OF PROJECTS RELATED TO RURAL EDUCATION FUNDED THROUGH PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED BY THE VARIOUS OFFICES OF THE DEPARTMENT.

I HAVE APPROVED THE 1984 MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT'S RURAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE. THE MAJOR OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN ARE: 1) PREPARATION OF AN ANALYSIS OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON EXCELLENCE TO DETERMINE ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR RURAL EDUCATION; 2) COORDINATION OF THE DEPARTMENT'S EFFORTS TO RESPOND TO THE RURAL EDUCATION SECTION OF THE FEDERAL INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION (FICE) STUDY ON EDUCATION; 3) PREPARATION OF AN ANALYSIS OF THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY PREPARED BY AN ADVISORY GROUP TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO DETERMINE THE POTENTIAL FOR INTERAGENCY COORDINATION; 4) IMPLEMENTATION OF 1984 NATIONAL RURAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE; AND 5) CONTINUED COORDINATION OF THE DEPARTMENT'S RURAL EDUCATION INITIATIVES.

MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS CHAIR OF THESE TWO COMMITTEES IS DEPARTMENT WIDE, HOWEVER MY MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY IS TO SERVE AS THE DEPARTMENT'S ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION. CONSEQUENTLY, I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO SHARE WITH YOU THE RURAL EDUCATION EMPHASES WE HAVE UNDERWAY IN OUR OWN OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION. OUR RURAL EDUCATION INITIATIVE IS DESIGNED TO ACCOMPLISH THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES: (1) TO SUPPORT AND IMPLEMENT THE DEPARTMENT'S RURAL EDUCATION POLICY DECLARATION; (2) TO IDENTIFY AN APPROPRIATE RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION AGENDA FOR RURAL VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION; (3) TO UPGRADE THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF INFORMATION GENERATED CONCERNING ISSUES IN RURAL VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION; (4) TO FOSTER A UNIFIED APPROACH WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF ISSUES RELATING TO RURAL VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION; (5) TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE VOICE FOR RURAL EDUCATION IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER DELIBERATIONS GOVERN-

ING THE OPERATION OF ADULT AND VOC ED. PROGRAMS AND; (6) TO IMPROVE INTER-AGENCY COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION IN THE OPERATION OF ADULT, VOCATIONAL AND OTHER EMPLOYMENT TRAINING PROGRAMS FOCUSING ON RURAL COMMUNITIES WITH EFFORTS DESIGNED TO PROMOTE THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF THESE COMMUNITIES.

TO ACCOMPLISH THESE GOALS, WE ARE INITIATING THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES AS PART OF A MULTI-YEAR PLAN OF ACTION: (1) THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INHOUSE CLEARINGHOUSE ON RURAL VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION TO WORK COOPERATIVELY WITH MAJOR RURAL EDUCATION CLEARINGHOUSES, SUCH AS, THE ERIC-CRESS; (2) CONTINUATION OF RURAL EDUCATION STAFF SUPPORT WITHIN THE SPECIAL PROGRAMS BRANCH OF OUR DIVISION OF INNOVATION AND DEVELOPMENT; (3) THE AUTHORING OF ARTICLES AND INFORMATION PAPERS FOR USE IN DECISION-MAKING, BOTH WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT AND ON THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS; (4) CONTINUED COLLABORATION WITH APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF AGRICULTURE, INTERIOR, AND LABOR AND OTHER AGENCIES RELATING TO RURAL EDUCATION; AND (5) THE CONTINUED PURSUIT OF COLLECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH MAJOR ORGANIZATIONS, SUCH AS REA, THAT FOSTER INFORMATION-SHARING AND INPUT TO OUR RURAL EDUCATION PLANNING AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT.

FINALLY, IT IS A DISTINCT PLEASURE FOR ME TO OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCE THE RECENTLY APPROVED DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION POLICY STATEMENT ON RURAL EDUCATION. IT IS APPROPRIATE THAT THIS ANNOUNCEMENT SHOULD BE MADE AT THE 75TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE RURAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION.

SOME OF YOU HAVE EITHER RECEIVED OR WILL SOON RECEIVE ONE OF THE OVER 150 PERSONAL LETTERS I HAVE WRITTEN TRANSMITTING THE POLICY STATEMENT TO RECOGNIZED LEADERS IN RURAL EDUCATION. I WISH I COULD HAVE SENT A PERSONAL COPY TO EACH OF YOU. IT WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF REA NEWS AND IN OTHER RURAL EDUCATION NEWSLETTERS AND RELEASES. SIGNED BY SECRETARY BELL ON AUGUST 23, THIS DECLARATION OF POLICY ESTABLISHES THE OFFICIAL POSITION OF THE DEPARTMENT IN SUPPORT OF RURAL EDUCATION. IT READS AS FOLLOWS:

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

THE SECRETARY

## Rural Education and Rural Family Education Policy for the 80's

The Department of Education recognizes the unique and valuable contributions rural America has made to both the social and economic development of our country. In recent decades, however, the changing dynamics of our urban centers have forced public policy decisions which tend to emphasize solutions to urban concerns rather than rural concerns; this despite the fact that over one-fourth of all Americans still live -- and are educated -- in areas described as "rural."* While the Department of Education remains committed to programs that help urban youth and adults, it is appropriate that we strengthen our efforts to provide programs that address the educational needs of rural and small town youth and adults. Those educated in rural areas must be provided with the basic educational tools necessary to enter an increasingly complex workforce. Rural educators ask no more than "equity" in their attempts to work within the Federal and State education structures to assure rural and small town youth and adults equal educational opportunities. To meet this goal, the Department of Education adopts the following policy:

RURAL EDUCATION SHALL RECEIVE AN EQUITABLE SHARE OF THE INFORMATION, SERVICES, ASSISTANCE AND FUNDS AVAILABLE FROM AND THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND ITS PROGRAMS.

* As defined in the 1980 census, the rural population comprises all persons living outside urbanized areas in the open country or in communities with less than 2500 inhabitants. It also includes those living in areas of extended cities with a population density of less than 1000 inhabitants per square mile.

To the extent that resources are available, the Department of Education is prepared to take the following initiatives in this regard:

- The Department will assist educators and administrators on all levels interested in developing outreach and volunteer programs with the active support and interaction of parents, teachers, civic groups and the business community to improve the delivery of educational services to rural communities.

- The Department will work to expand the data base on the condition of education in rural areas, and will provide the necessary technologies to disseminate information relevant to curriculum, organization, personnel and support services needed for educational institutions serving rural communities. Data collection will focus on information relating to regional designations; goals of rural education and rural family education; surveys of rural curricula; test score comparisons; tax base/student ratios; characteristics of effective rural programs and institutions; and descriptions of intermediate service agency delivery systems. To disseminate information to educational institutions and programs serving rural communities, including rural school districts, the Department will utilize State Departments of Education; ERIC/CRESS; the Rural Education Association; other professional and service organizations; national advisory councils; youth organizations; intermediate units; American Education Magazine; and, county and local agencies.

- The Department, with appropriate control staff, will closely monitor Education program regulations, eligibility and evaluation criteria, subregulatory directives and administrative policies to insure equity for all LEAs regardless of size, location or condition. Monitoring will focus on reducing complexity of criteria for funding; reducing complexity of application and reporting procedures and forms; and reducing unrealistic requirements in general while insuring competent and enlightened staff monitoring.

- The Department will assist in identifying and developing special programs available for handicapped individuals located in rural areas.

- The Department will provide personnel to coordinate the consolidation of available research on shortages and additional needs for analysis by the Secretary's Rural Education Committee. Research will focus on effective practices and characteristics of effective rural programs and projects.

- The Department will include rural institutions in demonstration and pilot projects, and will involve cross sections of rural communities in educational technology planning.

- The Department will provide consultative and technical assistance to rural educational entities as a means to improve the quality of education in rural areas. To facilitate

communications, the Department will support initiatives such as an annual national forum; a monthly newsletter; and utilization of extension services and existing organizations for dissemination of information.

- The Department will assist in improving public sector/private sector collaboration by coordinating networks at local, regional, State and Federal levels.

- The Department will assist rural education in improving the achievement of black students, American Indian students, children of migrant workers and other minorities. To this end, the Department will focus on data concerning rates of graduation from high school and college, including secondary and postsecondary vocational institutions and programs; gains in functional literacy, changes in college enrollment and achievements in adult education.

- The Department will assist individuals and families living in rural areas with family education programs and services through vocational home economics education, an established delivery system, as a means of improving quality of rural family education.

T. H. Bell
Secretary of Education

AUG 23 1983

WHAT I HAVE JUST READ TO YOU IS MORE THAN A POLICY STATEMENT. IT IS OUR COMMITMENT TO THE CAUSE IN WHICH YOU AS AN ORGANIZATION, AND AS INDIVIDUALS, BELIEVE DEEPLY AND HAVE INVESTED HEAVILY. THIS IS OUR PLEDGE TO JOIN YOU IN THAT CAUSE TO THE FULLEST EXTENT TO WHICH OUR RESOURCES WILL PERMIT. I HOPE THAT OUR PERFORMANCE HAS EARNED, AND WILL CONTINUE TO DESERVE YOUR CONFIDENCE AND RESPECT. WE ARE GOING TO HELP YOU "PUT THE SOX ON THAT OCTOPUS".

IT HAS BEEN A PLEASURE TO BE HERE WITH YOU. THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME.